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ABSTRACT

Present trends in the use of leisure time for both education and recreation point to interesting developments in the future. In education, more and more adults are going back to college, and this will bring changes in both the curriculum offered at the college level and the mixture of students. In recreation, people are using local recreation areas more and driving less. Much leisure time is now spent in the home, which places the television in a crucial position with regard to both recreation and education. The result may be that the home will become the entertainment, the education, and the recreation center, and our attention will shift from milieu, place, to ambience, the feelings attendant upon being in a given place. (DS)

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"CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL AMBIENCE: SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM"

I hope to offer a very brief report that summarizes my research and then offer a couple scenarios for future developments.

First of all, I make the assumption that, while the once-expected bonanza of leisure time abundance will not occur in this century, there will be a dramatic change in the ways in which people spend their leisure time. Recollect that Daniel Bell and others predicted that sometime in the 1980s, we would all enjoy a workweek of twenty to thirty hours. That was before the Oil crisis and our awareness that our energy-intensive economy might have to become a bit more labor-intensive after all. Productivity, which had increased 3-5% per annum from 1950 to 1970, has increased a bare 1% per worker per annum in the decade of the seventies. Observers tell us this is due in part to the increase in the numbers of people employed in the services sector of the economy, in part to the employment of untrained women and youth, and in part to the lack of capital for investment in new and improved machinery.

Contemporaneously, we have observed minor changes in education and leisure. But I believe these minor changes are important indications of the future. The single most impor-

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tant change in education in the last decade has been the arrival on college campus of people of maturer years. Several Universities indicate that 5 to 10% of their student bodies are composed of people over twenty-five years of age. Some of these are mothers returning to school, others are workers who never made it to college, others are people trained in one sphere who are re-training themselves for different employment.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics claims that a worker who entered the job market in 1970 should expect to make 6.6 job changes over the working life-span, and that at least one of these changes will involve major re-training. If so, it seems quite natural that more and more people in the process of re-training will find themselves on college and University campuses.

Teaching in a Leisure Studies Program within a Division of Forestry I not only see some current movements of this tide, but also some interesting possibilities for the future. We have people return to us who are experienced in industrial technologies that the University could not hope to duplicate. To take one example, logging by helicopter has been initiated by Westvaco in sections of the Monongahela National Forest where road access is difficult. Our Division of Forestry at one time considered itself the

research wing for industrial forestry in West Virginia. But when a logging helicopter costs $3 million, there is no way the University is going to be in the forefront of research for such methods of industrial forestry. And so, students returning for graduate education become our field advisors, keeping us informed as to what is going on in the real world. The question arises, what can these people learn, why do they come back to school? What the University essentially offers at this level is not further training in skills, but rather, opportunity to participate in a policy think-tank, fastening upon economic trends, political possibilities, the cost--benefit analyses of new technologies, and seminars with opposite numbers in competing and competitive companies.

The scenario I offer in connection with this: graduate education becomes much more of a collaborative process, a kind of sabbatical year for people already employed who are moving up to policy-making or decision-making positions within their companies. At the undergraduate level, I foresee more and more people with associate or technical degrees who will return for a bachelor's degree, after some five to seven years of working experience. I see two major benefits here: not only are these people older and more mature and therefore better students, but again they anchor programs in the real

world of practical working experience. A benefit to the University may well lie in the resuscitation of the now retrenched liberal arts programs. In practice, many of these students return with a vivid interest in history, a language, the history of western civilization, or fine arts, that puts to shame the flickering interest of nineteen year olds with too limited an experience of human nature and historical events.

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This leads to the second part of my concern, the coming leisure revolution. I do not believe we will see a twenty-four or even a thirty-two hour work week within our lifetimes. Perhaps thirty-six hours a week, perhaps a few more industries will adopt the four day, thirty-six hour work weeks, and very likely many more industries will adopt some form of flextime or glide time, allowing workers to choose their own patterns for their thirty six or forty hour work weeks. The real changes will occur not in the amounts of leisure time, but in the ways in which we spend it.

Again, I believe the new directions are already upon us, and the changes that have begun will become much more widespread. The most dramatic change for a forester or someone involved in public planning for public recreation

is that the celebrated outcry for the increase in outdoor recreational space has been heard, responded to, and seen some alterations in the process. Writing in American Forests in 1959, Marion Clawson said:

> We Americans don't just want outdoor recreation, we need it. Moving from farms to cities and suburbs has not meant turning our backs on land and water and open space. As a people, we don't feel right unless we can get back from time to time to the out-of-doors. (Clawson, 1959)

And in the following decade, wilderness became the new demand in American recreation. Backpacking and long distance trail hiking became our recreation panacea. In the same period, every New Englander felt obligated to take a summer pilgrimmage to the Grand Canyon, Mount Rainier, and Glacier National Park, possibly including Yosemite and Yellowstone, and not infrequently including Disneyland. Some few Westerners also felt the call to visit Gettysburg and the Nation's Capital. In the seventies, the myth of the long distance trip lost some of its appeal, due in part to the increase in the cost of gas, but also due in part to the realization that time is one of our scarcest resources. (Lakein, 1973)

We have retained our interest in outdoor recreation, but it is more likely to be closer to home, more likely to be an afternoon swim and picnic or a weekend camping trip than a weeklong car journey. The result is, state parks and forests and some national parks and forests have actually increased total visitor days; people have stayed closer to

home, and sc actually had more time to spend in the campground, historic area, fishing pond, or trail. For the future, vacations will be characterized by less time on the road, more time in local or regional scenic or tourist attractions. An expert in the air travel industry, trying to explain the fact that bookings in 1978 were 15% ahead of 1977, said: "The more affluent we become, the more precious time becomes." (Quoted in U.S. News and World Report, July 10, 1978).

At least 70% of our leisure time is spent at home. New developments have not only begun to make our homes more comfortable and more luxurious, the home entertainment industry has also begum to sell large screen television, and a multitute of computerized home entertainment packages. The family room will come to dominate the leisure scene over the next twenty years. The televisinn monster that occupies twenty to forty hours a week of the average American's time will occupy that much time and more in the future, but on a larger screen, and with a greater number of alternatives in programming. Marie Wynn, in The Plug-In Drug, takes a very negative view of television:

> In viewing television, the grown-up, as well as the child, is taking advantage of an easily available opportunity to withdraw from the world of activity into the realm of nondoing, nonthinking, indeed, temporary nonexisting. (Wynn, 1977)

There are unquestioned grounds for pessimism when one views the slush available and attended to by the American public. But there is hope too: the programming on Public Television improves each year, and the era of programs of your own choice is not far removed. A good part of leisure in the future will be dominated by the screen in the family room, or the several screens in different rooms of the house. A much greater freedom of choice will allow the public who wants educational TV to offer its services, will be able to benefit from them. Watching BBC-1, one can get an education in everything from Shakespeare to finite mathematics. The future, instead of closing down upon us, will offer us a greater abundance of choices, and, to all appearances, there will be worthwhile and enlightening alternatives, not choices between Laverne and Shirley or Maud.

In sum, Americans will choose to return to college campuses in greater numbers, and some of this return will be done in the comfort of one's own living room with the help of educational television. The outdoors will be used more generously, while long distance highway usage will be down. Television and other electronic media will play a larger role in the education and leisure choices of tomorrow. Instead of having a "home entertainment center", the home will become an entertainment center. Our attention will shift from <u>milieu</u>, place, to <u>ambience</u>, the feelings attendant upon being in a given place.

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